
The Thrasher Newsletter

Co-Editors: Nancy T. Cherry & Sue Q. Thrasher - Circulation: John E. Thrasher III - Volume 32 No. 4 - December 2014

Merry Christmas to ALL!



There is always room for one more,
maybe two or three or four,
Always space for another face,
around our family tree.
Come on in. Sit down with me,
Be as welcome as can be,
You might be an aunt or cousin number nine,
or maybe the friend of a friend of mine,
Thrashers, all! Aren't we a hoot?

And it's Christmas, to boot!

It's Official! MATA Merges with TFA

At the Thrasher Family Association reunion in June 2014, the Mid-Atlantic Thrasher Association accepted the invitation of the Thrasher Family Association to merge, contingent upon special provisions that guarantee that the identity of MATA be preserved in some way, perhaps as a chapter. TFA chairman John E. Thrasher III appointed a committee composed of officers of both associations to work through the details. Members of MATA have been added to the TFA membership list and are receiving *The Thrasher Newsletter*, co-edited by Susie Thrasher of TFA and Nancy Cherry of MATA.

There was some discussion at the meeting about what the name of the combined organization should be – whether to call it the Thrasher Families Association, but the group thought that Family was right. It is probably better, now that the Thrashers in western Maryland and Baltimore have been found to be closer to the southern Thrashers in lineage than previously thought.

More committee work is still to be done on merger issues such as the newsletter format, treasury and bylaws. We will be reporting our progress as the committee settles these issues by email and telephone.

The Old Clock Doctor Repairs Timepieces

This article is slightly abbreviated and edited with permission from the writer, Jacob Bembry. It appears in full form in *The Sanford Journal*, Summer 2014. Contact: sanfordhistory@gmail.com



Bill Thrasher stands beside a clock in his yard

Since 1970, Bill Thrasher has been tinkering with things that tick and tock. His hobby, as well as a side vocation, which has become a little business, is doctoring old clocks and helping them run like new.

Now, mind you, Bill will be the first to tell you that he doesn't fix electric or digital clocks. His expertise lies in mechanical clocks. Holding a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from the University of Alabama, he still gazes with wonder at the clocks but he can, indeed, tell you how each one works.

"That clock there doesn't run on electricity and it never has to be wound," Bill tells the reporter who is held spellbound by the clock sitting on a shelf in Thrasher's living room.

Bill goes on to explain that the clock, which belongs to one of his customers, is called an "Atmos" clock. The clock is controlled by the atmosphere; a one-degree shift in the temperature during the day can power the clock for a week, so the clock runs constantly.

Bill sits down and talks about the things that are most important to him – his relationship with Jesus Christ (when a caller gets him on the telephone, he answers with the greeting, "Praise the Lord"), his family and clocks.

His long and storied career involves working with the Harris Corporation, in the space design program, as well as being a professor of mechanical engineering at the Florida Institute of Technology and at Latournea University in Longview, Texas. A Christian campus, Thrasher said that he felt he was able to influence a few students for Jesus Christ during his brief tenure there.

After leaving Latourneau, Bill and his wife, Juanita, moved to Live Oak, where they have a son, Bryan, who works for the Department of Forestry, and to be near their only grandchild, Amanda. Their daughter, Melanie, works as an evidence clerk for the sheriff's office in Acworth,

Bill recalls one particularly difficult clock that he had been asked to fix. The clock came from a World War II aircraft carrier and had been presented to the son of a pilot who had been killed in action. The clock was passed down to the son's son and finally to a nephew, who found out about Thrasher from a friend in Lake City. The clock was brought to Bill, and he discovered that a pin had been broken off that went into a hole that was only one-five-thousandth of an inch in diameter.



Bill stands beside a clock and the sign his son, Bryan, made for him outside his workshop. Photos: Jacob Bembry

Bill found the drill bit he needed through a friend and was able to learn, through a time consuming process, how to drill a hole that small. "I love to learn," he said.

A walk through Bill's home and workshop on Coliseum Avenue in Live Oak is like a walk through a museum for clocks. There are grandfather clocks, like the one that propelled him into his hobby, which he kept for 29 years before giving it to his son. Bill explains that a grandfather clock has to stand at least 60 inches high; if it is lower than that, it is considered a grandmother clock!

There are also wall clocks, mounted clocks and anniversary clocks. Bill has tools that help him determine if the clock is ticking right, like the small clock computer he has, as well as an assortment of other tools and instruments for his craft. Like the clocks he repairs, Bill Thrasher just keeps going!

The Old Clock Doctor can be reached by telephone at (386) 364-4953 or by email at old-clockdoctor@windstream.net.

2015 Norcross Reunion Update

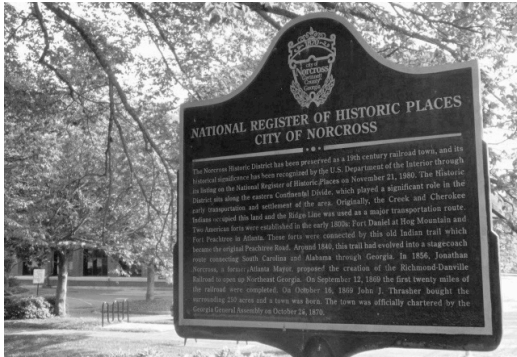
by David E. Sumner

Since the last newsletter was published, we have switched the official reunion hotel to the Holiday Inn Express in Norcross because of a much better rate for the meeting room. The 1,000 square-foot meeting room will be available for Thrasher guests on Friday evening and all day Saturday. The newly renovated hotel offered Thrasher Reunion guests, a nightly rate of \$89, which includes free Wi-Fi and a hot breakfast buffet. The hotel also offers free guest parking, a 24-hour business center, outdoor pool, fitness center, and laundry. It's about two miles from downtown Norcross and 23 miles northeast of Atlanta.

The reunion is June 12-13, but the hotel reservations deadline is June 1. After that our block of rooms will be released. Dee Crowgey, sales manager, told me that June is a busy time of the year and, if you wait beyond June 1, you may not be able to get a reservation at all. Make your reservation now. I've already made one for Elise and me.

My first visit to Norcross came in 1992 with my wife and two sisters after we had attended our first Thrasher reunion in Columbus. I returned again to make reunion plans in June 2014. What a difference 22 years made to Norcross! It's a beautiful town filled with historic charm. Downtown Norcross (www.Norcrossga.net) has been voted "Best Downtown Arts and Cultural Scene" by *Gwinnett Magazine*. It has 9 restaurants, 13 shops and stores and some art galleries or photo studios. I ate at the *Iron Horse Tavern*, *Mojitos Cuban Bistro* and *The Crossing*, where we will have our Saturday dinner. All three had excellent food and service.

The Norcross Welcome Center and Museum is where visitors can learn about the city's rich history and area attractions. Its director, Cate Kitchen, has been an invaluable help to Joe Stine and me in making hotel arrangements and arranging the tour by Gene Ramsay. She and Dr. Ramsay are co-authors of *Images of America - Norcross* published by Arcadia Publishing.



Welcome Center visitors will find historic documents, photographs and newspapers. It includes prominent photo displays about John J. Thrasher, the city's founder and first mayor. Artifacts in the Baseball Museum tell about several famous baseball players who grew up in Norcross. The oldest fire truck in Gwinnett County is in

the Fire Station Museum adjacent to the Welcome Center.

David Sumner grew up in Dade City, Fla., and has been a member of the Thrasher Family Association since 1992. He now lives in Anderson, Indiana, with his wife, Elise. Send questions or comments to davidesumner@gmail.com. He and Joe Stine are organizing the 2015 reunion.

Reunion Dates: June 12-13, 2015

Hotel: Holiday Inn Express Norcross, 7035 Jimmy Carter Blvd, Norcross, GA 30092

Hotel Reservations: (800) 315-2621 or (770)409-0004

Hotel reservation deadline: June 1, 2015

Saturday dinner: 6:00 p.m. The Crossing, 40 S. Peachtree St, Norcross, GA (678) 280-9081

Send dinner reservations to Joe Stine, stinejoe@bellsouth.net or (407) 855-5319 (You pay for meals that night, but reservations are needed to reserve space.)

Dinner reservation deadline: June 8, 2015

“That small town you read about in *Southern Living*”

By Joseph Stine

Plans are shaping up for the Thrasher reunion in Norcross, Georgia, this coming June 12-13. I visited Norcross in October to check things out. We'll be just a short drive from downtown Norcross.

Downtown is that small town you read about in *Southern Living* magazine. It is only one block long but packed with neat restaurants just waiting for you to try on Friday night or Saturday noon. The main street has been repaved and landscaped just for us. Plenty of parking is available.



The recently remodeled *The Crossing* restaurant, where we will dine on Saturday evening, is in the train depot built in 1909. I ate there; the food is great. By the way the train still runs through the middle of town.

Now for a taste of history: on Saturday morning we are planning a walking tour of downtown Norcross. Although the area is quite small, we are also planning an alternate mode of transportation for those who have difficulty walking. As a tour guide we have obtained the services of Gene Ramsay, one of the authors of *Images of America - Norcross* published by Arcadia Publishing. By trade Gene Ramsay is a consulting engineer with a doctorate from Georgia Tech in Industrial Engineering but by avocation, he is a Georgia historian. He has lived in the Atlanta area for more than twenty-five years and in Norcross for the past eight years. We had lunch together at The Crossing and talked about Atlanta area history. I know you will find him as interesting as I did. He has already found a Thrasher buried in the Norcross City Cemetery - W. A. Thrasher. Who was W. A. Thrasher? That is your homework assignment.



Cover image from a December 1879 *Harper's Magazine* article.

Norcross was incorporated by the Georgia Legislature on October 26, 1870. Four men were named as original commissioners: John J. Thrasher, Jesse Thrasher, Gorman T. Robinson and Stephen T. McElroy. We know John J. Thrasher was Cousin John. Second homework assignment: Who was Jesse Thrasher? The other two guys don't count.

You need to plan to be with your "cousins" at the Thrasher reunion to get the whole story of the history of Norcross. Cousin John is ringing his bell calling all of you to get off the train and come on downtown for a fun time.

Joe Stine is a Thrasher because his mother was a Dade City Thrasher thanks to Cousin John. He was born in Sanford and grew up in Orlando. He graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Industrial Engineering and has worked in distribution and as an engineering consultant.

New England Thrashers?

By Nancy Torphy

Nancy Torphy is a member of the Thrasher Family Association. Her mother was a Thrasher, and she is seeking more information about the Thrashers from New England.

Frank Belias Thrasher, my maternal grandfather, was born in Roberts, Ford County, Illinois on May 18, 1887. He was the son of William Jesse Thrasher (born in Waltham, LaSalle County, Ill; 1851-1889) and Luella Skeels (born Thawville, Iroquois County, Ill; 1859-1902). A small amount of family history said that William's father was Jesse Swift Thrasher who had been born in Vermont in 1819 and died in Thawville, Iroquois County, Ill. in 1892. Jesse's wife was Esther Lathrop who was born in 1829 in Plainfield, CT. and died in Thawville, Iroquois County, Ill. in 1911.

Finding the origins of Jesse Thrasher proved to be difficult. I made the decision to approach things from the possibility that he might have been named for a grandfather Jesse Swift. Because I had a birth year and a state name, I began researching the Swift family. There is a great deal of research on the Swift family, but I was finally able to zero in on the correct Jesse Swift and his wife Lydia Storrs and the fact that their daughter Huldah had married a Thrasher in Wilmington, Vermont in 1814. By contacting Wilmington, Vermont, I determined that the Thrasher Huldah married was named William. That certainly made them the right age to be Jesse's parents. I also was encouraged by the name William. William Jesse was the name of Grandpa's father and those naming patterns from that time really do exist.

Finding more about William and Huldah's family has proved to be difficult. They lived in Monkton, Addison County, Vermont. William died in 1831. The 1830 census lists two adults and 4 children – 2 boys and 2 girls. I believe that one of the girls may have been Mary and that the other boy may have been George, but that is based totally on guesswork. The 1840 census lists Huldah as head of household and two other persons 1 boy and 1 girl, ten years older than the previous census. By 1840, Jesse had moved on to Illinois. He had gone to LaSalle County and appears to have been working for the Illinois Michigan Canal construction which was being developed by the Rockwell Company from Norwich, CT. In 1849, Jesse married Esther Lathrop, a member of the family of the developers of the canal.

Huldah Thrasher, Jesse's mother, moved to Illinois sometime early in the 1850's and her grave is located in the Rockwell Cemetery. The stone reads, Huldah Thrasher; wife of William Thrasher; died November 7, 1852. She is buried next to Lydia Lathrop, the mother of Esther, Huldah's daughter in law.

With the help of Richard Paquin of Lunenburg, Mass., I was able to connect to the ancestors of the Thrashers mentioned. This family is descended from Christopher Thrasher, an early settler of Taunton, Mass. His name first appears in 1643 in Taunton. He was married to (?) Katherine Stephens. Through this line, stated briefly, his son Samuel Thrasher m. Bethia Brooks; his son Samuel m. Abigail _____; his son William m. Sarah Caswell; his son George m. (?)

Patsy Cutter; his son William m. Huldah Swift; his son Jesse m. Esther Lathrop; his son Frank m. Lucia Whiteside. The last two names are my maternal grandparents. It is also important to note that George Thrasher was identified by Richard Paquin as "the one who went to Vermont." It is also important to note that George is another name that appears several times in Grandpa's family.

John Paul Thrasher of Newnan, Georgia thinks there may very well be a connection between the New England Thrashers and the rest of us. He found this information on Wikipedia: Taunton, Massachusetts was founded by settlers from England and officially incorporated as a town on September 3, 1639. Most of the town's settlers were originally from Taunton in [Somerset, England](#), which led early settlers to name the settlement after that town. (John reminds us that many of our Thrasher ancestors came from this part of England)

If you have any research that might help Nancy find the missing link, please contact her at: ntorphy@wi.rr.com

Historical Document Shared

Submitted by Robert Thrasher of Columbus, MS
robertthrasher@bellsouth.net

Isaac Thrasher, son of John Thrasher and Ruth Cloud, was my 3rd great grand father. He was born about 1758 in Virginia, moving with his family into North Carolina, later found in Pendlington South Carolina in 1790 census then moves on to Greene County Georgia. Found on Georgia Tax rolls in the early 1800.

These are two documents that were given to me by Joe Grooms at the 2013 reunion held in North Carolina. One for the purchase of 100 acres of land in Rockingham County N.C. January 27, 1808 and the second a 1000 dollar bond obligation on January 27, 1805.

Thrasher Isaac from Johnston Collester deed for 100 acres of land

This indenture made this twenty seventh day of January in year of our lord one thousand eight hundred and eight, Between Collaster Johnston of the county of Rockingham and state of North Carolina of the one part and Isaac Thrasher of the county of Greene and the state of Georgia of the part. Witnesseth, that the said Collaster Johnston for an in consideration of the sum of four hundred dollars in hand paid the receipt whereof acknowledges, hath given granted aliened enfeofed and confirmed, and by those presents give grant sell and do confirm unto the said Isaac Thrasher a tract or parcel of land containing one hundred acres. Beginning at a red oak William Mithell line running south to a hickory grub and thence around for the compliment. Together with all woods, waters, mined minerals hereditaments and appurtenances to the said Isaac Thrasher his heirs and assigns forever, they yielding and paying sums of money yearly or otherwise as the General Assembly may from time to time direct. And the said Collester Johnston and his heirs the said leaseholds and premises and every part thereof against him and his heirs and against all and ever other person or persons whatsoever laying lawful right or claim thereunto, do hold to the said Isaac Thrasher his heirs and assigns for ever shall and do warrant and defend by these present. I witness whereof the said Collester Johnston hath hereunto set my hand and Seal the day above written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of

Isaiah I. Handcock Collester Johnston
State of North Carolina Rockingham County . By Sessions 1809

Augustin C. Browder

This written deed from Collister Johnston to Isaac Thrasher was duly proved in open court by the oath of Augustin C Browder and motion ordered to record.

R. O. Gallaway c.c.

Milestones

Albert and Peggy Thrasher, long time members of the Thrasher Family Association, celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on September 13, 2014.

History Tidbit

In Henry County, Georgia, history comes alive with their annual Spirits of McDonough City Cemetery Tour. Vessie Thrasher Rainer, our kin, was one of their founding citizens and is always featured on their annual tour:

Vessie Thrasher Rainer – born in 1898 found an immediate love of history through fire-side stories told by her father Gustavus (Gus) Leviticus Thrasher. Vessie Thrasher married Dr. Robert Andrew Rainer, Sr., who moved from Mississippi and set up a dental practice in McDonough. History lessons from the past led Rainer to write a book *Henry County - Mother of Counties*.

Editors' Corner

Nancy: More information is coming soon on the DNA project. If you have any ideas on future issues dealing with the merger, by-laws, finances or what ever else come up, your input is always welcome. Contact Nancy Cherry by letter at: 3100 Elkrigde Court, Beltsville, MD 20705-3239 or by email at: NancyTC@aol.com

Susie: I continue to expand our Thrasher Family Association website, and have added a *password-protected* Member Directory. This directory is always as current as the last email address change. If you would like the password, please email me, and I will be happy to send it to you. I also want to add a section on *Family Stories* and *Special Places*. We are not constrained by space on the website, and I know from personal experience that Thrashers love to tell family stories. Good news: I have permission from Athens Magazine and Morris Publishing to put an abbreviated and updated version of Celestea Sharp's story about *Old Salem* on our website. Coming soon! Contact Susie Thrasher by letter at: 1101 Christian Drive, Watkinsville, GA 30677 or by email at: drsuetrasher@gmail.com

John E. Thrasher, III continues to do yoeman's work on copying and mailing our newsletter. Contact him at: 6424 SE 169th Avenue, Micanopy, FL 32667 or by email at: fish_jet@bellsouth.net

Please share your news with your "cousins by the dozens."
We especially like pictures to go with stories.

Be sure to visit **our Thrasher Family Association** website at:
<http://thrasherfamilyassociation.wordpress.com>

